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Christianity the Light of the
moral World

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# CHRISTIANITY

THE

# LIGHT of the MORAL WORLD:

A

# POEM.

# CHRISTIANITY

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# LIGHT of the MORAL WORLD:

A

# POEM.

By THO. HOBSON, M. A. of *Queen's College, Oxford.*

F. Hayman del. — B. B. Muller sculp.

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TO

# NICHOLAS-FRANKLYN MILLER, Esq;

## Of *Hyde-Hall*, in *Hertfordshire*.

*Dear Sir,*

IT may perhaps be a little uncommon to present a grave and serious composition to one, whose youthful imagination something of a gayer nature might be more likely to engage. But, as true sentiments of religion cannot be too early inculcated, I think it no way improper to inscribe the following poem to you, whose moral as well as intellectual endowments I would by all means endeavour to improve.

It will afford you indeed but a very imperfect representation of the shining glories of the subject, which it is intended to illustrate: yet even this faint view of them may deserve your attention, inasmuch as it may contribute towards opening and expanding the growing faculties of your mind, and

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and prepare it for the free admiſſion of a more enlivened and extenſive proſpect. As you advance on to maturity, your dawning reaſon muſt naturally gain ſtrength and activity, and your judgment become more ſound and piercing. Of which I can never deſire you to give a more convincing proof, than by ſhewing always, in proportion to their increaſe, a reverential regard to the ſacred truths of our holy religion.

The bounty of providence, and the ſingular liberality of a moſt indulgent parent, have kindly conſpired to exempt you from the laborious application, which uſually attends a learned profeſſion. But never think this an excuſe for neglecting to proſecute the ſtudy of polite and ſolid literature; much leſs for diſregarding the nobler attainment of a well-grounded and exalted virtue. Your being bleſt with greater advantages, is the ſtrongeſt reaſon imaginable why you ought to make greater improvements, and form an intimate acquaintance with the moſt commendable and uſeful ſciences. Every ſituation, ſuperior to the common rank of mankind, demands a ſuperior degree of knowledge, both as an ornament and ſupport to its dignity. A good patrimony is a truly valuable ingredient in the happineſs of human life: yet there is one *more* valuable to be acquired by reading and reflection, which is *good ſenſe* to enjoy it in a proper and becoming manner. Without this

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ennobling qualification, how ſmall the diſtinction between ſome men of fortune, and thoſe leſs-noiſy well-bred animals, which they commonly make it their diverſion and their buſineſs to follow!

The ſpacious field of erudition lies open before you, and invites you with a wonderful variety of inſtructive and entertaining ſcenes. Happy you, who have leiſure and liberty to expatiate in it, wherever fancy or genius lead you, without check or confinement! The ſeeming dulneſs and narrowneſs of the avenues need not weaken your inclinations, nor diſcourage your entrance. At every ſtep you take, the proſpect will gradually enlarge and brighten upon you, and inſpire warmer deſires and bolder reſolutions to proceed. I cannot indeed flatter you, that you ſhall meet with nothing to interrupt or retard you in your progreſs. Some little difficulties will unavoidably fall in your way. But theſe, like the obſtacles you meet with in a lively chace, will be inſenſibly overcome, when you are animated and fired with a brisk and vigorous purſuit. Your buſineſs is only to gather ſome of the faireſt flowers as you paſs along; to reach out your hand to the tree of knowledge, which is moſt flouriſhing and fruitful in the two great nurſeries of learning, and ſelect from its branches a laſting ſtore of its choiceſt product.

The

The arts and ſciences are truly liberal, and will abundantly reward your induſtry, by ſupplying you with ſuch ſeeds of wiſdom, and furniſhing you with ſuch excellent truths, as may ſerve to regulate every part of your future conduct. They will refine and elevate your taſte above every unbecoming amuſement, and enrich your imagination with a treaſure of noble ideas, which will infallibly ſecure you from that moſt vulgar and irkſom of all wants, the want of thought. All the little fears and follies of inconſiderate youth, will fly, like ſhadows, before the riſing ſun of knowledge, and we ſhall ſoon ſee nothing of that ſeaſon remaining, but its vivacity and innocence. May theſe ever remain, untainted by vicious habits, and unimpaired by years!

The embelliſhment of your mind will give a decent and beautiful poliſh even to your outward behaviour, and adorn your converſation with all the graces of eaſy wit, manly ſenſe, and proper language. This will qualify you, not only for a more agreeable enjoyment of ſolitude, but for appearing in the conſpicuous ſcenes of life, and promoting in ſome meaſure the public good, which ought always to be warm at your heart. You had a worthy anceſtor, eminently skilled in the laws, and zealous for the preſervation of the liberties, of his country. Look back upon his example, and let

it

it kindle a glowing emulation in your breaſt, and rouze you to an imitation of it in every thing that is generous, great, and excellent!

As you encreaſe your ſphere of knowledge, you will proportionably encreaſe the ſphere of your pleaſures. How many delightful characters will you perceive in the works of nature and the volumes of learning, which to the ignorant obſerver, are all one undiſtinguiſhed univerſal blank! Every new diſcovery, even in things of little importance, will be attended with joy, and excite very pleaſing ſenſations; juſt as the approach of light is grateful to the eye, though it preſents you with no other charms, than its own. It would be tedious to mention particulars, and I might give you a diſtaſte for theſe future delights, by giving you a languid deſcription of them beforehand. But I may inform you in general, that you have in reverſion an inexhauſtible fund of rational pleaſures, infinitely more pure and permanent than thoſe of the ſenſes; the moſt exquiſite of which, like flaſhes of lightning, are gone before they are well perceived, and like them too, often prove fatal and deſtructive.

The endearing and important relation, which I bear to you at preſent, gives me a very tender concern for your future welfare and character in the world. I muſt therefore leave it upon your heart, that the ſureſt method of acquiring and preſerving both, is by deeply imbibing the ſound

principles of religion, and conſtantly adorning them with a ſuitable practice. This is the only ſolid foundation of real happineſs; and the ſtructure, which you build upon it, will riſe with unrivalled ſtrength and undecaying beauty. This will add a genuine luſtre to all your other bright accompliſhments, and effectually recommend you to the eſteem of all thinking men, beyond any external ornaments, how glittering and pompous ſoever.

Go on then to cultivate and enrich your mind, with every amiable and ſocial quality, with every moral and chriſtian virtue; that you may fully anſwer the juſt expectations of a moſt affectionate mother, and be ever diſtinguiſhed in your ſtation by properly diſplaying all the advantages of nature, education, and fortune!

Theſe, Dear Sir, are the moſt ſincere and moſt ardent wiſhes of

*Your much obliged,*

*and moſt faithful*

*humble Servant,*

Greenwich,
March 25. 1745.

THO. HOBSON.

# INTRODUCTION.

IT is a truth univerſally received and acknowledged, that the great author of nature has eſtabliſhed ſome invariable *law*, or ſtanding *rule* of action, for the conduct and government of his rational creatures. But there have been as many *various* hypotheſes invented to *diſcover* and *aſcertain* this law of the *moral* world, as there have been to explain and account for the phænomena of the *natural*. Among this great *variety* of ſyſtems, *that* ſeems to be demonſtrably the *true* one, which takes in the *deity* for its *foundation* or *center*, and makes his *immutable will* the adequate *rule*, or ultimate *ſtandard*, of moral actions. Taking the truth of this for granted, it will from hence evidently follow, that the ſum and ſubſtance of morality and religion conſiſts in *acting conformably to the divine will*, in the ſeveral *relations* we ſtand in to our *creator*, our *fellow-creatures*, and *ourſelves*.

Nothing ſeems more reaſonable than that mankind, ſhould have a competent *knowledge* of theſe relations, *before* they can act agreeably and conſiſtently with them: Or in other words, than that they ſhould *know* what the will of God is, *before* they can be obliged to *do* it.

Here then the queſtion ariſes, by *what means* ſhall they *acquire* the knowledge of the divine will, or *how* ſhall they *diſcover* what duties it directs them to perform? They can have no method of knowing this, but either by the *ordinary* uſe and exerciſe of their *rational faculties*, or by ſome *extraordinary* ſupernatural information from the author of their being.

Vain *pretenders* to ſuperior underſtanding *diſclaim* all inſtruction from heaven, and have made bold *attempts* to prove, that their own *unaſſiſted* reaſon is ſufficient to inſtruct them in the knowledge of all moral and religious duties. But the hiſtory of the greateſt part of mankind, for near four thouſand years, is a ſtanding *confutation* of this *ſelf-ſufficiency*, and an *inconteſtable proof* how ſmall and inconſiderable a progreſs the *utmoſt efforts* of human reaſon can make towards a *perfect diſcovery* of the will of God. Conſult the moſt *celebrated* writings, and examine the moſt *refined* and *exalted* ſentiments, of heathen *moraliſts*, and you will find them entirely *miſtaken* in ſome, very *doubtful* in others, and quite *ignorant* in many of the moſt *eſſential* and *important* truths of morality and religion.

Their notions concerning the *exiſtence* and *attributes* of the deity were at beſt very *imperfect* and *erroneous*: And the *worſhip* they paid him was debaſed and corrupted with the groſſeſt *idolatry* and *ſuperſtition*. They were but *little* acquainted with their firſt *original*, their *dignity* in the rank of beings, and their *true happineſs* in the preſent ſcene of things; and had only ſome *wavering* and *doubtful hopes* of the ſoul's immortality, and no manner of *conjecture* of the reviving body, in a world to come. Whatever faint conceptions they might form of a *ſupreme*, they had not the *leaſt* idea of a *ſaving* power: And the *forgiveneſs* of ſin upon ſincere *repentance* was a doctrine ſo far from being *embraced* or *underſtood*, that as *Lactantius* informs us, the great *Roman* orator thought it abſolutely *impoſſible*. Their ſchemes of morality were likewiſe not only *obſcure* and *defective*, but ſtrangely intermixed and polluted

polluted with the allowance of the foulest and most detestable *vices*. And, had they been without spot or blemish, yet as long as a *future state* of rewards and punishments remained *undiscovered* or *uncertain*, they wanted proper *sanctions* and *motives* to establish the *obligation* and inforce the *practice* of them. In short, the most compleat rule of action that can possibly be collected from mere *pagan philosophy*, would be but a *perplexed* and *indigested* composition of *inconsistent* opinions and *ineffectual* precepts.

The revelation of *Christ* was intended to remove these *uncertainties*, to rectify these *errors*, and supply these *defects* of unassisted reason. Accordingly it has made a *full* and *clear* discovery of the nature and perfections of God: it has manifestly unfolded and displayed the various *relations* we bear to *him* and to one *another*, and set before us a *regular* and *uniform* system of moral and religious duties from thence arising, which are recommended and inforced by the *weightiest* and most *endearing* obligations. Above all, it has given us the strongest *assurance* of the pardon of our transgressions through the *merits* of a saviour, and fully disclosed to us the unbounded animating prospect of a happy *immortality*.

The design of the following poem is to represent *this great difference* between the discoveries of *reason*, and those that are made by *revelation*, in a more *obvious* view. It therefore describes the *midnight* darkness and original *confusion* of the first rude *chaos* of nature, as a significant emblem of the deplorable *ignorance* of the *heathen* world; and the beautiful *order* and *brightness* of the universe arising from the *light* of the *sun*, as an expressive and lively picture of the *clear knowledge* of the *christian*. The propriety and justness of this comparison is confirmed by the inspired *Apostle*, who informs the *Corinthians*, that *it is God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness*, at the creation, *who hath shined in our hearts, for the illumination of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face*, or person, *of Jesus Christ*. Even the *prophetic* writers,

ters, who only ſaw him as it were through a *glaſs darkly*, deſcribe him as a *ſtar* that ſhould come out of *Jacob*, as the bright *morning-ſtar* that ſhould viſit us, and as the *ſun* of righteouſneſs that ſhould ariſe with healing in his wings. The evangelical prophet *Iſaiah* expreſly calls him the *Light* of the gentiles, to open the eyes of the *blind*, and bring them out of *darkneſs* and the *ſhadow* of death. This was the ſure word of prophecy, whereunto they did well that took heed, as unto a *light* that ſhineth in a *dark* place, until the *day dawned* and the *day-ſtar aroſe* in their hearts.

Suitably to theſe predictions, our Saviour's immediate forerunner was a *burning* and a *ſhining* light, and his birth was uſhered in and attended by an *extraordinary ſtar* in the firmament. The ſublime evangeliſt emphatically ſtiles him the *True Light*, which lighteth every man, that cometh into the world: And, he that followeth *Him*, ſhall not walk in *darkneſs*, but ſhall have the *light* of *life*. When St. *Paul* was ſent to convert the gentiles to *chriſtianity*, he is ſaid to be ſent to *open* their *eyes*, and to turn them from *darkneſs* to *light*. And St. *Peter*, after their converſion, exhorts them to ſhew forth the praiſes of him, who called them out of *darkneſs* into his *marvellous light*.

With what great propriety the times of *heathen ignorance* are here ſhadowed out to us under the figurative characteriſtic of *darkneſs*; and the *clear revelation* of God's will repreſented by the beautiful image of *light*, ſeems too obvious to want illuſtration. The *light* of *chriſtianity* was evidently deſigned to make as viſible a change in the *moral* world, as the great *luminary* of heaven does daily in the appearances of the *natural*. The faint light of *reaſon*, like a glimmering ſtar, ſerved indeed to *diſcover* the darkneſs of pagan night, but could not *diſpel* it. The *Jewiſh* revelation was a *lamp* unto their feet, and a *lantern* unto their paths, through the pilgrimage of *life*; but *too dim* to conduct them ſafely through the valley of *death*, and give them any *clear* diſcovery of a ſtate beyond it. But the Goſpel of *Chriſt*, wherein theſe ſcattered



beams

beams are all *united* and *enlarged*, pouring forth, like the noonday ſun, its *ſtrong diffuſive* luſtre, diſperſes all the *clouds* of ignorance and error, and *fully* diſplays the bright proſpect of *heaven*, from whence it ſelf is *revealed*.

Thus much ſeemed requiſite to be premiſed by way of introduction, becauſe chriſtianity and paganiſm are conſidered in this view throughout the following poem. The more judicious and diſcerning reader will readily perceive it to be a *juvenile* and *crude* compoſition. And the truth is, it was written above eight years ago, only as a *chriſtmas-exerciſe*; and has received but very ſmall improvements ſince that time, except the addition of ſome notes and obſervations, which may ſerve to ſupport or illuſtrate it, where need requires. If the kind and favourable reception, which it met with on that occaſion, has *too eaſily* prevailed with me to offer it to a more public peruſal; it is humbly preſumed that the foregoing circumſtances, together with the good intention of the author, will beſpeak all *neceſſary candour* and *indulgence* to its many imperfections.

# CHRISTIANITY

THE

# LIGHT of the MORAL WORLD.

---

O Goodneſs infinite, Goodneſs immenſe!
That all this Good of Evil ſhall produce,
And Evil turn to Good! more wonderful
Than that, which by Creation firſt brought forth
*Light* out of *Darkneſs!* *Milton*, B. 12.

NOT from eternity, myſterious name!
Sole attribute of God! too big for thought
Of man to comprehend! this pond'rous globe
Of earth ſelf-pois'd, nor kindred orbs, that range

*Not from Eternity*] The Exiſtence of the World from *Eternity*, was aſſerted by many antient Philoſophers. But the *Abſurdity* of this Opinion, and the *Creation* of the World out of *nothing* by *one ſupreme*, *eternal*, *ſelf-exiſtent Being*, has been abundantly demonſtrated. See *Cudworth*'s Intellect. Syſt. B. 1. c. 5. *Stillingfleet*'s Orig. Sac. B. 3. c. 2. *Clarke*'s Demonſtration Prop. 3. *Enquiry* into the human Soul, Vol. 2. page 345.

Through ſpace unbounded, far from mortal ken,
In ſpheric order roll'd their ſteady courſe
With harmony of motion well attun'd
In each conſpiring part. Nor was the ſcene
Of univerſal *Beauty's* fairer form
Coeval with the rude unactive maſs,
Which inſtant, at the vital voice of God
In operation mighty, from the womb!
Of nothing into pride of being roſe.

*Light* dawn'd not yet: nor yet the circling hours
Unveil'd the ſmiling morn, nor evening clouds
With crimſon ting'd. All-ſhadowing darkneſs ſpread
Her black pavilion o'er the formleſs heap

*Form Coeval*] As the *Matter*, of which the Univerſe conſiſts, was not *Eternal*, ſo neither was the preſent *Form* and *Order* of Things *coeval* with *Matter*; but aroſe by ſucceſſive Degrees out of an *undiſtinguiſhed Maſs*, wherein the Materials of all Bodies lay at firſt promiſcuouſly mingled in *Darkneſs* and *Confuſion*, as hereafter repreſented. *Ovid* had undoubtedly been acquainted with the *Moſaic* account of the *Original* of the World, when he gave the following beautiful Deſcription of the unfaſhioned *Chaos*.

*Unus* erat toto naturæ vultus in orbe,
Quem dixere *Chaos*: rudis indigeſtaque *moles*,
Nec quicquam niſi pondus *iners*, congeſtaque eodem
Non bene junctarum *diſcordia* ſemina rerum.
Metamor. Lib. 1.

*Light dawned not yet*] *Ovid.* ibid. Lib. 1.

Nullus adhuc mundo præbebat lumina *Titan*,
Nec nova creſcendo reparabat cornua *Phœbe*.

Of

Of undigeſted worlds. Dread ſilence rul'd
Uninterrupted through the dreary waſte,
And deepned awful horror's deepeſt gloom

Nature was void: And all her laws lay hid
In the dull volumes of myſterious night
And rolls of anarchy. Creation jarr'd;
And fouleſt *Diſcord* with inteſtine rage
Inflam'd the new-born elements to war.
Each embryo-creature, uninſpir'd with breath
Of purer ether, hung its idle head
On the cold boſom of infernal *Chaos*,
Or ſlept infolded in its native duſt,
Unconſcious of the moving ſprings of life.

But ſhort this dead creation: ſhort the reign
Of univerſal darkneſs. Power divine

*Nature was void*] The appearance of Nature was without *Shape* or regular *Order*, and the Earth was *unfurniſhed* with Trees, Herbs, Flowers, or any of the living Creatures, wherewith it is now ſo beautifully enriched and adorned.

Spoke the creative word, "*Let there be Light*,
*And there was Light* --- An inſtantaneous dawn
Of floating rays, at firſt diffuſe and wide,
Shed round the riſing world a languid gleam,
To colour o'er the dark unfiniſh'd maſs,
And form the outlines of a brighter ſcene.
But when *Deformity* retir'd, o'ercome,
And *Order* lifted up her beauteous head,
Victorious o'er *Confuſion* and *Miſrule*,
The ſcatter'd beams, by voice omnipotent
From the groſs elements collected, all

*Let there be Light*] The firſt Thing that was *formed* out of the rude Matter, which was at firſt *created*, was *Light*, or thoſe ſubtil *fiery* Particles, which now compoſe the Body of the *Sun*. This *inſtantaneous* Production of it, *Let it be*, *and it was*, gives us the moſt noble Idea of the unlimited Power of the *Almighty*, who *commanded* all things into Being by his *Word*. Its original Formation was as *quick* as *Thought:* and it ſeems ſtill to *retain* ſome Impreſſion of that omnipotent Fiat, which firſt produced it. For we are told by *Aſtronomers*, that the *Motion* of the Rays of Light, which proceed from the Sun, is ſo incredibly *ſwift*, as to paſs through above *ten Millions* of Miles in *one Minute*. — See what the *Critics* have remarked upon the *Sublimity* of this Paſſage in *Smith*'s excellent Tranſlation of *Longinus* page 128.

*At firſt diffuſe and wide*] Though the Particles of Light were *made* the *firſt* Day, yet we find that they were not *united* into *one* Body till the *fourth*. And therefore in this Interval, being diffuſed and ſcattered abroad, they could only give a *faint* and *languiſhing* Light to the Earth, in Compariſon of that they afforded, after they were *collected* and *embodied* in the Sun. See the learned *Wall*'s critical Notes on *Gen.* i. 3.

Obſe-

Obſequious round their ſteady center play'd,
And join'd in one huge orb, the radiant *Sun*,
To vanquiſh night, and reign the *King* of day.

Hail pureſt off-ſpring! unpolluted ſtream!
Fair effluence of *Him*, who lives in *Light*
Yet unconceiv'd by man! Thy golden throne,
Forever fix'd by geometric rule,
In heaven's high concave, with unbroken laws
Of kind attraction, world with world unites
In friendly league: And, as a limpid fount
Perennial flowing, unexhauſted pours
A living luſtre round the rolling orbs.

*King of Day*] The greater Light to *rule* the Day, *Gen.* i. 16. Subter mediam fere regionem *Sol* obtinet, *dux* & *princeps*, & moderator luminum reliquorum, mens mundi & temperatio, tanta magnitudine, ut cuncta *ſua luce illuſtret* & compleat. *Cic.* Scipon. Somn. And the learned *Selden* tells us that the *Phenicians* called the Sun the *Lord* of Heaven, becauſe it is the moſt ſplendid and glorious of all the heavenly Bodies. De Diis Syr. Syntag. 2. c. 1. Dr. *Long*'s Aſtron. p. 192.

*By geometric Rule*] It was a Saying, I think, of *Plato*, Ὁ Θεὸς ὁ Γεωμέτρης ἐστὶ.

*Of kind Attraction*] According to the Principles of *Sir Iſaac Newton*'s Philoſophy, the Earth and the reſt of the Planets are retained in their reſpective Orbits, and regularly perform their periodical Revolutions, by Virtue of ſome *attractive Quality* in the Sun, which is the Center of the planetary Syſtem.

At thy approach, the univerſal choir
Of raptur'd angels tun'd their ſilver harps,
And ſang for joy. The palpable obſcure
Of antient *Chaos* and her *Siſter-Night*
Confounded fled. All nature ſmil'd ſerene,
And, as the roſe freſh-op'ning to the morn,
Unveil'd her boſom to thy genial beam.

At thy approach, if philoſophic minds
Conjecture truth, the vegetable race
Spontaneous kindled into fragrant life:
Touch'd by thy plaſtic warmth, the flutt'ring brood
Of light-wing'd inſects animate appear'd,
And crawling reptiles tumbled into day,

*The univerſal Choir*] The morning Stars ſang together, and all the Sons of God ſhouted for Joy. *Job.* 38. 7. See *Milton* B. 7. Line 252.

*If philoſophic Minds*] It has been the Opinion of ſome, both Antients and Moderns, that the Earth, being impregnated by the benign Warmth and Influence of the *Sun*, at firſt *ſpontaneouſly* brought forth all the ſeveral Species of Vegetables and Animals. But this cannot be *true*. For, altho' they *now* need the Influence and Heat of the Sun, yet they were *originally* formed out of the Earth, and their Seeds with them, by the *Power* of *God*, before the Sun was made. See *Bp. Patrick* on *Gen.* i. 12. Dr. *Burnet*'s ſacred Theory, B. 2. c. 1. 2. Dr. *Watt*'s Philoſ. Eſſay, page 195.

By

By ſtated laws mechanically form'd.

But why on *Thee* this life-inſpiring power
Has vain *Philoſophy* beſtow'd? --- We own
Thy ſtrong attractive force, thy bounteous ſtream
Of ſeven-fold *Light*; whoſe variegated ray,
Reflected various, calls forth every charm
Where beauty bluſhes, or where colours glow,
In the bright ruby or the tulip gay.
But vital influence from *Him* deſcends,
Whoſe all-commanding fiat firſt brought forth,
And into full perfection ſpoke, the whole.

Thus lovely from the womb of darkneſs roſe
All natures works: And thus the ſhadowy void
Dawn'd into beauteous form. The faſhion'd earth

*Sevenfold Light*] Every Ray of Light proceeding from the Sun conſiſts of *ſeven* different Sorts, which have each of them a peculiar unchangeable Colour, namely, *red*, *orange*, *yellow*, *green*, *blue*, *indigo*, and *violet*, and from the various *Compoſitions* and *Reflections* of theſe *ſevenfold primary* Rays ariſe all thoſe innumerable Colours, which form the gay *Picture* of the Univerſe, and every Thing that is *bright* and *beautiful* in it. See *Algarotti* on Light and Colours, Dial. 4.

Shone

Shone out in comlieſt order, all-array'd
With ſmiling verdure and enamel'd robes
Of flowers unnumber'd; whoſe unnumber'd ſweets
Swell'd into rich luxuriance, fair expand
Their inmoſt foldings, and exhale around
Ambroſial odours through the balmy air,
A grateful incenſe to the new-born day!

The *Sun*, exalted from his native eaſt,
In boundleſs glory, to meridian height,
Showr'd down inceſſant through the pure ſerene
His gladning beams; which, like a mantle, cloath'd
With *Light* redundant each alternate face
Of earth's revolving orb from pole to pole;
For yet its ſite was not oblique. And hence

*Site was not oblique*] If Dr. *Burnet*'s ingenious Hypotheſis be as *true*, as it is *entertaining*, the Axis of the antediluvian Earth was *parallel*, and not *oblique* as at preſent, to the Axis of the *Ecliptic*. And hence there was a *perpetual Equinox*; an *Equality* and *Unity* of Seaſons without any *Exceſſes* of Heat or Cold; the Air calm and ſerene, and free from thoſe *tumultuary* Conflicts of Vapours, which now diſturb it: In ſhort, the whole Earth was then a Seat of *Paradiſe* and *Pleaſure*, very different from what it appears to be *now*. See his *ſacred Theory*, B. 2. c. 1, 2, 3.

An

An unity of ſeaſons; one full bloom
Of ſpring eternal; one unbounded flow
Of joy-diffuſing plenty, undiſturb'd
By winds or ſtorms. And hence were temp'rate climes
Unchang'd by chilling froſts or ſcorching ſuns,
And all this globe the ſeat of paradiſe,
The bliſsful ſeat of harmony and love!

See then the change! review with wondring eye
This firſt great contraſt, "*Chaos* wrapt in ſhades
Of double darkneſs," and "a finiſh'd world
Adorn'd with every beauty *Light* beſtows;"
Emblems too juſt of thoſe two different ſtates,
That form the *Moral World*, my future ſong.

A nobler creature, wrought in finer mould,
To lord this ample fabric, and adore

*A nobler Creature*] Alluding to that of *Ovid*; *Sanctius* his animal, mentiſque capacius altæ, Deerat adhuc, & quod dominari in cætera poſſet. Met. Lib. 1.

The architect immortal, was not yet.
The great *Three-One*, as ſacred records tell,
In unity and kind conjunction join'd
To raiſe his being, and adjuſt his frame
By due-proportion'd rules. His outward mien
Sublime, to view the azure-bending roof
Of heaven's high canopy. His inward lamp,
A bounteous emanation of the *Light*
Eternal-ſhining; image all-divine;
With ſanctity of reaſon's fineſt ray
Illuminate, to correſpond with heaven:
Nature's great maſter-piece, and end of all

*As ſacred Records tell*] Gen. i. 26. Let *Us* make Man. *Critics* and *Commentators* upon this Paſſage, look upon it as a plain Intimation of a *Plurality* of *Perſons* in the divine *Eſſence*; and as implying that theſe three Perſons as it were *adviſed* and *conſulted* about the Production of *Man*, as if a greater Power and Skill was employed in forming a Creature of ſo much *Beauty* and *Majeſty*. See *Greg. Nyſſen.* de Opificio Hominis cap. 3. orat. 8.

*Mien ſublime*] Cum natura cæteras animantes abjeciſſet ad paſtum, ſolum hominem *erexit*. *Cic.* de leg. Lib. 1. So *Ovid.* Met. L. 1. Pronaque cum ſpectant animalia cætera terram, Os homini *ſublime* dedit, cœlumque tueri Juſſit, & *erectos* ad ſidera tollere vultus.

*Image all-divine*] Gen. i. 27. God created Man in his *own Image*, in the *Image* of *God* created he him. *Tertullian* gives us a ſhort Account wherein this Image of *God* in *Man* conſiſted. Habent illas ubique *lineas* Dei, quà *immortalis* anima, quà *libera* & ſui arbitrii, quá *præſcia* plerumque, quà *rationalis*, capax *intellectus* & *ſcientiæ*. Lib. 2. contra Marcion. cap. 9. And it is a noble Sentiment of *Cicero*, Ad divinam imaginem propius accedit humana *virtus*, quàm *figura*. See the *various* Opinions of Authors, concerning the *Image of God in Man*, in *Stackhouſe's* Hiſtory of the *Bible*, Page 33.

This

This vaſt harmonious ſcheme of things below,
And endleſs happineſs his only end!

Yet here the little mimic world of man
A nearer ken demands to ſcan its frame.
Nice ſubtle-moving ſprings, and nicer tubes
In complex order aptly organiz'd,
And rang'd by wiſdom's ſecret-working hand,
Compoſe the outward animal-machine;
Which vital moves, by ſoul of lower birth
Inform'd, diffuſing life through every limb.

The *Mind*, an ever-active unmix'd form,
A pure immortal flame, by heaven infus'd

*Endleſs Happineſs*] That God in his Act of *Creation* had a principal Regard to the *Happineſs* of his *Creatures*, and that in his Actions towards them he is influenced by no other Principle, but what is entirely *coincident* with, or perfectly *ſubordinate* to this, ſeems evidently proved in a late ingenious Treatiſe entitled *Divine Benevolence*.

*Soul of lower Birth*] The *animal* or *ſenſitive* Soul of Man. It was the Opinion of the antient *Stoics* and *Platoniſts*, as we learn from *Antoninus*, and alſo of the *Fathers* of the Church, as appears from *Irenæus*, that Man is compoſed of *three* diſtinct eſſential Parts, σῶμα, καὶ ψυχὴ, καὶ νοῦς. Which Doctrine is expreſly confirmed by St. *Paul*. I pray God, ſays he, your whole *Spirit*, and *Soul*, and *Body* be preſerved blameleſs, 1 *Theſſ.* v. 23. Where by *Spirit* is underſtood the purely *immortal* Part of us; and by *Soul*, the Seat of all our *Deſires*, *Affections*, and *Paſſions*. See Bp. *Brown*'s Proceedure of the Underſtanding, B. 2. C. 10.

Through all this wondr'ous complicated frame,
Unrival'd gives the little ſyſtem laws,
And, ſelf-dependent, regulates the whole.
As *Newton*'s ſun the erring planets guides,
And orbs revolving into orbs combines
In circles well-according: Thus impell'd,
And drawn by reaſon's intellectual chain,
Each ſubject paſſion moves within its ſphere.

Thrice happy man! in this tranſcendent light
Of native reaſon, clear and unobſcur'd
By vapours foul, as that eternal ſource
Of undiminiſh'd brightneſs, whence it flow'd!
No tongue can ſpeak, no thoughtful heart conceive,
With what tranſporting joy his raptur'd eye
View'd all creation; ſtill intent to read

*Intellectual Chain*] It is not improbable that there was ſomething *analogous* to the *attractive* Force of the Sun *originally* inherent in human Reaſon, whereby it preſerved a beautiful *Regularity* and *Harmony* among the Paſſions, and kept them in a juſt *Obedience* to its Dictates. Something *like* this is hinted at in *Norris*'s Theory of Love, page 23. 39. and in *Cheyne*'s Philoſ. princip. page 46.

The

The worlds all-perfect volume full diſplay'd,
Where each inſtructive page, each line, proclaims
The author's glory, whoſe unerring hand
Gave beauty, life, and energy to all.

In this fair work, as in a mirror bright,
He ſaw, well-pleas'd, the true congenial forms
Of right and good: he ſaw his *Maker*'s will;
And all he ow'd to him was grateful praiſe,
With pure devotion of the ſilent heart.
Unaw'd by iron force of tyrant laws,
In golden liberty 'twas his to range
The wide-extended ſcene, where fancy led,
And, with deep-penetrating thought, explore
Cauſe after cauſe. His freedom, unconfin'd

*All-perfect Volume*] Alluding to the Story of one *Antony*, an Aſcetic, who, when he was aſked by a Philoſopher what he did without *Books*, anſwered, O philoſophe, meus *codex* eſt *natura creaturarum*, qui adeſt cum voluero, verbaque mihi relegit Dei.

*His Maker's will*] It is not here meant, that *Adam*, even in his *perfect* State, was capable of diſcovering the Will of God from the Nature of Things *alone*: but, that he clearly perceived the *Agreement* between *them* and the *divine Will*; the Knowledge of which, as well as of all other Things, it is highly probable, was *communicated* to him by ſome *immediate Inſpiration* from God himſelf. See Bp. *Williams*'s B. Lect. Serm. 1. Revelat. examined, Vol. 1. Diſſ. 1, 2, 3.

By

By narrow bounds, knew no ſevere reſtraint,
But one ſhort rule, one negative command,
The pledge of his obedience, "*Not to eat*
"*Of one forbidden fruit*, whoſe mortal taſte
Wou'd blend corruption with the ſeeds of life,
And on his future offſpring death entail,
Death unrepriev'd, and everlaſting woe.

*One negative Command*] The *Jews* had a conſtant Tradition, that there was a Revelation of *moral Duties* made to *Adam* ſoon after his Creation: but as *theſe* could *then* ſcarce have any Place, it was requiſite that ſome *other* Inſtance of Obedience ſhould be impoſed; and a leſs Reſtraint was impoſſible, than the Prohibition of *one ſingle* Tree in the whole Garden. See *Selden* de Jur. N. & G. Lib. 1. c. 9. Revel. exam. Vol. 1. page 87. Dr. *Jenkin*'s Reaſonableneſs, Vol. 1. c. 13.

*Forbidden Fruit*] *Of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil thou ſhalt not Eat*, Gen. ii. 17. The Learned are not agreed, whether this was the Fruit of a *Vine*, or of an *Indian Fig-Tree*, or of what Sort it was. Nor does it ſeem neceſſary for us to *know*. For, as one juſtly obſerves, if it was not requiſite to have been *concealed*, it would not have paſſed unſpecified in the Text; nor would the *Tree* have been *revealed*, which *concealed* their Nakedneſs, and that *concealed*, which *revealed* it. — But, that the Fruit might contain ſome *noxious* Quality, which introduced a ſtrange *Diſorder* and *Corruption* into the human Conſtitution, may be prov'd upon the Principles of natural Knowledge. The *Indians*, for inſtance, are acquainted with a Juice, which turns the Perſon, who drinks it, into an *Idiot*; and yet leaves him in the Enjoyment of his *Health*, and all the Powers of his Body ſound and perfect. Revel. examin. Vol. 1. Diſſ. 1. *Jenkin*'s Reaſonableneſs, Vol. 2. p. 260.

*Death unreprieved*] *In the Day that thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die*, Gen. ii. 17. that is, Thou ſhalt certainly contract a *mortal* Infirmity, and from henceforth be in a *dying* Condition. — *Adam* indeed was *naturally* made capable of *Diſſolution*, and *his Life* was to be preſerved by the *Tree* of *Life*; which, as the antient Fathers and ſome modern Divines conjecture, had a Virtue in it to maintain all the Organs of the Body in the ſame Perfection, wherein they were created. But upon his *Tranſgreſſion*, this *extraordinary* Means of preſerving his Life was to be taken from him; and then of Courſe the *common* Law of *Mortality* muſt take Place, and he muſt return to the Duſt out of which he was formed. See Dr. *John Clarke* on moral Evil, page 211. *A. Bp. King* on the Orig. of Evil, C. 4. Sect. 1. Not. 2. Sect. 8. Not. 38. And his Serm. on *Gen.* ii. 16.

Thus

Thus will'd *Jehovah.* And while reaſon rul'd,
Supreme in power to guard this ſacred law
Inviolate; how bleſt was *Eden*'s pair!
How chaſte their pleaſures and ſublime their joys
They walk'd with God, and all their paths were peace.

But *Woman,* prone to err, prompt to deceive,
Yet firſt deceiv'd by adulation ſmooth
Of glozing ſerpent-tongue, too fondly gaz'd
On the myſterious tree's ambroſial fruit,
Which look'd temptation, and inflam'd her breaſt

*Serpent-Tongue*] *Naturaliſts* have obſerved, that the whole Species of *Serpents* are endued with a *native Subtilty* above all other Creatures. And therefore a Serpent was the propereſt *Inſtrument* for the *Devil* to make uſe of in *deceiving* our firſt Parents. What particular *Kind* it was of, may be difficult to determine. But that ſeems to be the moſt *probable Conjecture,* which ſuppoſes it to have been a *flying fiery* Serpent, like thoſe which are ſtill bred in *Arabia* and *Egypt.* Theſe, in *Numb.* xxi. 6. are called *Seraphim,* which is tranſlated *fiery,* becauſe they ſhone *like Fire* when they flew in the Air. — Such of the holy Angels, as were ſent to deliver God's Will to Mankind, are thought to have appeared in the *Form* of theſe *ſhining* Serpents, and for that Reaſon were likewiſe ſtiled *Seraphim.* 'Tis therefore likely enough that the Tempter made Uſe of ſome ſuch Serpent of *ſurpaſſing Brightneſs,* which *Eve* might eaſily *miſtake* for one of the illuſtrious Angels or heavenly Seraphim; and thereby ſeduced her to give Credit to him. For we cannot ſuppoſe that ſhe was *ſo ſimple,* to think that brute Creatures had the ſame Gift of *talking* as ſhe had, much leſs, that they knew *more* of God's Will than ſhe did. See *Plin.* Nat. Hiſt. Lib. 8. c. 21. *Baſil.* Hom. de Paradiſo. *Tertul.* de Præſcrip. Heret. c. 47. *Patrick*'s Comment. *Tenniſon* of Idol. p. 356. *Mede*'s Diſc. 40, 41. Revel. exam. Diſſ. 2. And the more *curious* Reader may ſee a finely imagined Dialogue between *Eve* and the *Serpent* in *Burnet*'s Archæol. Philoſ. Lib. 2. c. 7.

With

With the proud hopes of being wiſe, like God!
And had ſhe *only* gaz'd!--- The awe-ſtruck muſe
Might ſhun to paint, with horror's trembling hand,
That maze of errors, and thoſe worlds of woe,
Erected on the ruins of her fall.

*Man* felt the wound: yet let not man arraign
Nature's ſtill-pleaſing foible, ſtill the beſt,
And faireſt work of God. For holy writ,
In juſtice to her name, aſſerts this truth,
We fell by woman, yet by woman roſe,
Loſt paradiſe by *Eve*, an earthly bliſs,
But, happy change! by *Mary* heaven we gain.

*Of being wiſe*] *God doth know, that in the Day ye eat thereof, ye ſhall be as Gods, knowing Good and Evil*, Gen. iii. 5. The Serpent here very *falſly* inſinuated, that the Reaſon of the Prohibition was, becauſe God knew that by eating the forbidden Fruit, Man would attain to *higher* Degrees of *Wiſdom*. For the Tree was not called the Tree of *Knowledge* of *Good* and *Evil*, becauſe God intended by that Name to repreſent the Fruit of it as ſomething that would *improve* the Underſtanding, or make thoſe who eat of it *more knowing*; but becauſe he deſigned thereby to make *Tryal* of our firſt Parents, whether they would *be good* or *evil*, whether they would *own* the *Sovereignty* of their Creator, and whether they would *obey* or *diſobey* his Commands. See *Pool*'s Annotations, and *Rutherforth*'s Eſſay on Virtue, C. xi. N. *a*.

*Only gazed*] It is the joint Opinion of many, both antient and modern Writers, that if our firſt Parents had continued *innocent*, they would have been *tranſlated* into a more perfect State of Bliſs and Happineſs, without ever undergoing *Death*.

*Pleaſing foible*] See *Milton* B. 10. l. 888.

Here

Here then let *Hope*, the lovely ſmiling queen
Of diſtant joy, prophetic of a *Light*
To riſe with healing in his ſacred wings,
Invigorate the dark-deſponding mind,
And lead it dauntleſs down the gloomy depths
Of midnight darkneſs, to the chearful dawn
Of man's redemption, heaven's auſpicious morn.

See then, how riſing from the fatal ſource
Of our rebellious parents foul revolt,
*Sin* rear'd her hydra-head: *Diſeaſe* advanc'd

*Prophetic of a Light*] Alluding to that obſcure prophetic Promiſe of a *Saviour*, which was made ſoon after the Fall. *I will put Enmity*, ſays the Almighty denouncing the Curſe againſt the Serpent, *between thee and the Woman, and between thy Seed and her Seed: It ſhall bruiſe thy Head, and thou ſhalt bruiſe his Heel.* This Sentence, ſays a great Author, was deſigned for Adam's *Conſolation*, and as a Stay of *Hope*, that *his Seed* ſhould deſtroy the Power of *Satan*, and be reſtored to the Favour of God. And *without* this Hope, he muſt have been void of *all Inducements* to Love and Obedience, and have had *no Senſe* of Religion at all. Bp. *Sherlock* on Prophecy page 69, 82. — 'Tis worthy of Notice how remarkably this Prophecy is fulfilled, even in the moſt *literal* Senſe. For between the Serpent and Man there ſubſiſts the moſt deadly *Antipathy*. And *Naturaliſts* obſerve that this Antipathy is ſtill *greater* and more *vehement* between the Serpent and the *Female* Sex; inſomuch that if but the naked *Foot* of a *Woman* doth never ſo little preſs the *Head* of a Serpent, he preſently dies. *Mede*'s Diſc. 42. Revel. exam. Vol. 1. Diſſ. 7.

*Sin rear'd*, &c.] *Sin* or *moral Evil* was firſt introduced by our firſt Parents *abuſing* their Liberty, and *tranſgreſſing* the Law of their God. And *natural* Evils, ſuch as *Diſeaſes*, *Pain*, *Death*, and the like, are the neceſſary *Conſequences* of moral Evil. See Dr. *Sam. Clarke*'s Demonſtrat. page 108. Dr. *Berriman*'s firſt Serm. at *B.* Lect. Or the Subject treated more at *large* in Dr. *John Clarke*'s Enquiry, &c. and A. Bp. *King*'s Eſſay on Evil, with the learned Notes of his *ingenious Tranſlator*.

In various ghaſtly ſhapes, an awful train!
And ſin-born *Death*, that ever-dreaded foe,
Triumphant reign'd o'er all. Hence *Vice* diffus'd
Her pleaſing poiſons, and unnumber'd ills,
Curs'd harveſt, ſprung; the baneful weeds of woe:
And hence are both diſorder'd in their frame,
The world of nature, and the world of man!
A ſcene, more horrid than the viewleſs maſs
Of rude materials, ere the ſource of day
Effus'd his orient beam! as after light
A dreary darkneſs moſt offends the eye.

Thus order into blind confuſion ran,
And diſcord deep-involv'd the ruffled mind

*The World of Nature*] Even the *inanimate* Part of the Creation felt the ſad Effects of the Introduction of *Sin* into the World. The *Ground* was *curſed* for *Adam*'s Sake — *Thorns* and *Thiſtles* it brought forth unto him, *Gen.* iii. 17, 18. *Milton* has given us a fine Deſcription of the *Alterations*, which the *Almighty* commanded to be made in the Courſe of Nature ſoon after the *Fall*; wherein he ſuppoſes the very *Poſition* of the Earth to have been altered and the Seaſons changed.

Some ſay, *He* bid his Angels turn aſcanſe
The Poles of Earth twice ten Degrees, and more,
From the Sun's Axle: They with *Labour* puſh'd
*Oblique* the centric Globe -- to bring in *Change*
Of *Seaſons* to each Clime. — B. 10. Lin. 668.

The *Conſequences* of which *Obliquity* are deſcribed more particularly in Dr. *Burnet*'s ſacred Theory, B. 2. C. 6.

In

In mad-fermenting tumults. Thus the ſoul
Loſt that true conſonance, which ſweetly flow'd
From paſſions harmoniz'd by reaſon's hand.
For as the *Sun*, when from his center mov'd,
Would want the juſt proportion of his power,
And tumbling worlds, on worlds prone-ruſhing reel
Excentric from their orbs, and rudely mix
In *Chaos* wild, and elemental war:
So, when the ſecret all-connecting charm
Of moral gravitation ceas'd to draw,
And ſovereign *Reaſon* yielded up his ſway,
Each lawleſs paſſion, burſting from their bounds,
Bent all their violence with brutal might
To overturn the pillars, that ſupport
The temple of fair *Virtue* and her laws.
Such was the dire event of daring pride

*Mad-fermenting Tumults*] After Reaſon had once receeded from its original *Superiority*, a ſtrange *Irregularity* of Paſſion and Appetite was introduced, and the *inferior* Faculties very frequently uſurped the Power of *governing*; from whence perpetual *Diſorder*, *Tumult*, and *Confuſion* unavoidably aroſe in the Mind of Man.

Too curious good and ill to know!--- yet ſtill
The proſpect darkens with ſucceeding times.

Benighted man the bright idea loſt
Of one all-forming, all-ſuſtaining God,
Of wiſdom infinite and power immenſe;
And, ſad exchange! the monſter-figur'd throne
Of *Folly* roſe. Hence various fancies form'd
As various Gods. This deify'd a dance
Of antic interfering atoms.--- This
The dull material ſyſtem call'd his God;

*Benighted Man*] It cannot be queſtioned, but that a general *intellectual Darkneſs* prevailed, and a *falſe Worſhip* took Place, very *early* in the antediluvian World. We are expreſly told by *Moſes*, that the Earth was *corrupt* before God, and, That all Fleſh had *corrupted* his Way upon the Earth, *Gen.* vi. 11, 12. where by *Corruption*, the *Jewiſh Doctors* ſay, is always underſtood *Impurity* or *Idolatry*. And *Sanchoniatho* has given a particular Account how the *Hoſt* of Heaven came to be worſhipped in the *ſecond* Generation from *Adam*, and *Pillars* or rude *Stones* in the *fifth*, and how *Statues* and eminent *Perſons* were *conſecrated* in the *ninth*. See *Hyde*'s Relig. Vet. Perſ. page 58. Dr. *Arth. Young* on Idolatry Vol. i. page 7.

*Various Gods*] After the Knowledge of the *One True God* was loſt, *Deities* were multiplied to an almoſt incredible Number. Qui Deos *eſſe* dixerunt, ſays *Cicero*, tanta ſunt in *varietate* ac *diſſenſione*, ut eorum moleſtum ſit dinumerare ſententias. De Nat. Deor. lib. 1. See *Heſiod.* Op. & Dier. L. 1. V. 250. *Tertull.* Apoll. C. 14. Dr. *Jenkin*'s Reaſonableneſs, Vol. 1. page 356.

*Deify'd a Dance*] It was the abſurd Opinion of *Democritus*, *Epicurus*, and others, that the World was formed by an *accidental Concourſe* of the ſeveral Parts whereof it conſiſts. And the Univerſe was a Work ſo full of *Wonder* to the antient *Stoics*, that they thought it a *God*. Vis illum, h. e. Deum, *mundum* vocare? *Non falleris*, ſays *Seneca*. See Cic. de N. Deor. lib. 1. §. 20. 24. and, lib. 2. § 17. 37.

And

And that before the *Sun*, the throne of *Light*,
Faint ſhadow of his *Maker*, proſtrate fell:
Nay ſome to birds, and beaſts, and creeping things
A groveling, ſenſeleſs, adoration paid:
While ſome, with ſceptic doubt, believ'd in none,
Or, half-believing, impiouſly deny'd
His providential eye; whoſe boundleſs glance,
Quick-darting through the univerſal frame

*Before the Sun*] The moſt antient *Idolatry* was the Worſhip of the Hoſt of Heaven; and its Profeſſors were called *Zabii*. By which are underſtood not only *Chaldeans*, *Egyptians*, *Canaanites*, and *Syrians*, but all *other* Nations, who followed the like Practices. The *chief* Object of their Adoration was the *Sun*, known by the Name of *Mithra*, which the learned *Hyde* derives from *Mihr*, *Love* or *Mercy*. He indeed is of Opinion that the *Perſians* did not *worſhip* the Sun, as is generally believed; but only conſidered him as a glorious *Light*, and the fitteſt *Symbol* of the *Divinity*. But whatever *they* did, it is *certain* that *other* Nations *adored* him under various Appellations. The *Greeks* had a Temple at *Alexandria*, where they offered *human* Sacrifices to him: And there are *Roman* Inſcriptions remaining, wherein *Mithra* is ſtiled the *Invincible*, *Almighty*, and moſt *Holy God*. See Dr. *Long*'s Aſtronomy, page 179, 192.

*Nay ſome to Birds*] The antient Heathens had ſo many different *Images* and *Symbols* of their Deities, that there was ſcarce any Part of the *animal* Creation, but what was *ſacred* to one God or another. They worſhipped all Things but the *true God*, who *only* of all Things was to have been worſhipped. See Dr. *South*'s Serm. Vol. 3. page 284. Dr. *Young* on Idolatry, Vol. 1. page 69, 91.

*Believed in none*] *Nullos* eſſe omninò deos *Diagoras Melius* & *Theodorus Cyrenaicus* putaverunt. — Abderites quidem *Protagoras*, ſophiſtes illis temporibus vel maximus cum in principio libri ſic poſuiſſet, *De divis*, *neque ut ſint*, *neque ut non ſint*, *habeo dicere*, Athenienſium juſſu urbe atque agro eſt exterminatus, librique ejus in concione combuſti. *Cic.* de Nat. Deor. Lib. 1.

*Deny'd his providential Eye*] The *Academics*, *Epicureans*, and others, admitted indeed the *Exiſtence* of Deities, but looked upon them as *indolent* and *inactive* Beings, that were no way concerned in the *Government* of ſublunary Things. — *Telamo* uno vertit totum locum conficit, cur dii homines *negligunt*; nam ſi curent, *bene bonis*, *male malis* ſit, quod nunc *abeſt*. *Cic.* de Nat. Deor. Lib. 3. § 33.

Of

Of heaven and earth, as through a cryſtal globe,
O'er-rules, directs, and actuates the whole.

Not the learn'd *Stagirite*'s all-ſearching thought,
Exploring nature's depths, could reach the *Cauſe*
Immortal, uncreate; but blindly deem'd
Th' effect eternal, infinite, unmade.

Nor *Plato*, *Tully*'s God, heathen *Divine*,
In all his charms of moving eloquence,
E'er with unfaultring tongue pronounc'd this truth,
That God is *One*. While this great truth lay hid,
This all-combining principle unknown;

*Learned Stagirite*] *Ariſtotle*, ſo called from the Town of *Stagira*, where he was born. Though he was ſo great an *Enquirer* into the Works of Nature, that he could not give into that abſurd Opinion of the World's being formed by a *fortuitous* Concourſe of *Atoms*; yet he was ignorant of its *true* Original and imagined it to be *Eternal*. Maluit hanc pulchram mundi faciem ab *æterno* eſſe, quam aliquando ex æterna *deformitate* emerſiſſe. *Valeſius*, de Sac. Philoſ. *Cic.* de Acad. Lib. 4. §. 34, *&c.*

*Tully's God*] *Cicero* entertained ſo high an Opinion of *Plato*'s Wiſdom, that He honoured him with the Title of the *God* of Philoſophers. — Audiamus *Platonem* quaſi quendam *Deum* Philoſophorum. De Nat. Deor. lib. 2. §. 12. — And again, *Deus* ille noſter *Plato*. Epiſt. ad *Atticum* 16. lib. 4. — And yet in another Place he ſays, Jam de Platonis *Inconſtantia* longum eſt dicere, qui in *Timæo* patrem hujus mundi nominari *neget* poſſe: — Idem & in *Timæo* dicit, & in *Legibus*, & *mundum* Deum eſſe, & *cælum*, & *aſtra*, & *terram*, & *animos*, & *eos*, quos *majorum inſtitutis* accepimus. De Nat. Deor. lib. 1. §. 12.

The

The philoſophic wit, the deep-read ſage,
Immortal ſons of *Reaſon*, ne'er could form
A plan of *Moral Wiſdom* juſt and true.
Syſtem compar'd with ſyſtem, ſtill each jarr'd
With each, yet center'd all in this --- they *Err'd.*

Not leſs bewilder'd in ſurrounding ſhades
Of ignorance, from whence his being roſe,
And what his final end, man blindly walk'd
The maze of life. Dark to futurity,
His mental eye, like outward ſight immur'd

*Moral Wiſdom*] Whoever is converſant in the Writings of the heathen Philoſophers, muſt eaſily diſcern what *diſſonant*, *interfering*, and irreconcileable Precepts of Morality they contain. — It muſt be confeſſed that they *ſpoke well* of the Excellency and Advantage of *particular* Virtues: But how to reduce them into a uniform *conſiſtent Scheme*, and lay Men under an *Obligation* to *practiſe* them, was ſomething beyond the Power of human *Wit* and *Reaſon* to accompliſh. And indeed it was abſolutely *impoſſible*, that there ſhould be any *perfect* Syſtem of moral Duties, where the firſt *fundamental Principles* of Religion were not *known* and *believed*. See Bp. *Leng*, Serm. xi. at *B.* Lect. Dr. *Roger*'s Neceſſity of Divine Revel. Serm. i.

*Dark to Futurity*] 'Tis well known how much the Philoſophers of old were in the *Dark*, with Regard to a *future State*; ſome *doubting* of it, others abſolutely *denying* it, and even they, who favoured the Opinion moſt, never riſing higher than to a bare *Probability*. Vid. Cic. Tuſc. Queſt. lib. 1. §. 11. The *Poets*, who were the *Prophets* of thoſe Days, were the only Perſons that ſpake of it with *Confidence*; and yet they have repreſented it under ſuch *extravagant* Ideas, that one can ſcarce imagine that they believed their *own Deſcriptions*. — The Truth is, all the Arguments, that can be drawn from unaſſiſted Reaſon, amount to no more than a mere *Poſſibility* of a future Exiſtence, which is very far from a Proof of an *actual* one. Dr. *Burnet*'s Demonſtration of true Relig. *Johnſon*'s Serm. on the Law of Nat. pag. 24.

By

By horizontal bounds, ſaw nought beyond
The narrow verge of *Time*. The cloud hung deep,
And veil'd *Eternity*, that untry'd ſtate!
That pleaſing awful ſcene! whoſe endleſs views
Amaze, and warm, and animate the ſoul.
Even God's imperial care, the choſen *Jew*,
Saw but a typic-light; a ray that ſhone,
As through a glaſs obſcure, in dubious gleams
Oft unperceiv'd, too languid to diſplay,
Celeſtial *Canaan*, thy immortal realms,
Where ſtreams of pleaſure unpolluted flow!
What then was life! How vain its flatt'ring joys!
How ſhort their vanity! unſolid all
As fleeting vapours, or deluſive dreams!

*Typic-light*] It has lately been a Subject of very *learned Debate*, whether or no the Doctrine of a future State was known under the *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation. — If it be granted that the *Jews* had *ſome Notices* of it; it muſt at the ſame Time be granted that theſe Notices, being conveyed to them only under *typical* or *figurative* Repreſentations, were but very *confuſed*, *obſcure*, and *imperfect*, in Compariſon of that *clear Knowledge* of Life and Immortality, which is brought to *Light* by the *Goſpel*. See Mr. *Warburton*'s Divine Legat. B. v. Sect. 5, 6. Mr. *Rutherforth*'s Eſſay on Virtue, Chap. xi. xii.

All

All ſocial ties were looſe: the feeling ſenſe
Of ſweet humanity, that kindly melts
In ſoft compaſſion to another's woe,
Scarce taught the unrelenting heart to ſhed
A pitying tear. Hence fierce and uncontroul'd
Each ſelfiſh paſſion reign'd: hence ſecret fraud
And lawleſs violence, the cruel arts
Of ſavage life, diſſolv'd the ſacred bonds
Of unity and peace. Hence ſheath'd in arms
Refulgent, man, inſatiate of revenge,
Form'd the rude ſpear; and, more than brutal, dar'd
To ſtain the poliſh'd ſteel with human blood.
Thus war grew glorious: war, abhorrent moſt
From nature's ſtate of ſympathizing love,

*Hence ſecret fraud*, &c.] Theſe, and many other deteſtable Vices, were not only *practiſed* by whole Nations, but admitted by the greateſt Philoſophers into their moſt *refined* Syſtems of *Morality*. The Perſians, in *Xenophon*, taught their Children to *lye* loudly to their *Enemies*, ſo they ſpoke *Truth* to their *Friends*. — Others encouraged private *Theft* and *Robbery*; and the *Plunder* and *Murder* of neighbouring Nations was eſteem'd the higheſt Pitch of *Heroiſm* and *Glory*. — *Ariſtotle* ſpeaks diſdainfully of *Meekneſs* and a *forgiving* Temper; and even *Cicero* is an Advocate for *Hatred* and *Revenge*. See the Bp. of *London*'s ſecond *Paſtoral Letter*. Dr. *Jenkin*'s Reaſonableneſs, Vol. 1. page 3[illegible].

And unreſerv'd benevolence to all!

Such was their joyleſs life: their woeful end
Fancy's creative pencil ſcarce can paint
In all its hideous forms. When *Death* approach'd,
That dire, inexorable king of dread,
In the full pomp of terrors deep-array'd,
What images of *Doubt* and pale *Deſpair*
Roſe to th' aſtoniſh'd view; while on the heart
A heavy horror laid its leaden hand!
Hope ſickned into fear: Hope fled with life,
And left them in the grave.--Diſtracting thought!
To *Be* no more! or, what the wiſe think worſe
Than non-exiſtence, Be--- They knew not what,
They knew not where! Impriſon'd in a clod

*Worſe than Non-exiſtence*] Utter Extinction or Ceſſation of Being is what ſome of the moſt learned Doctors among the *Jews* have eſteemed the moſt dreadful of all Puniſhments; ſo interpreting *Tophet*, *Abaddon*, the *Vale* of *Slaughter*, and the like, for final Exciſion and Deprivation of Exiſtence. But *not to be* at all is ſurely more eligible, than to be *miſerable always*; Our *Saviour* himſelf having determined the Queſtion, *Matt.* xxvi. 24. See Bp. *Barlow*'s Remains, page 470. Dr. *Bentley*'s firſt Serm. at B. Lect.

Of

Of chilling clay! Be moulder'd down to duſt,
And blown in atoms round the whirling globe!
Be plung'd in whelming floods, or bath'd in flames
Of liquid ſulphur! Or be doom'd to lie
Fix'd in the cold embrace of icy chains!
Perhaps be worſe than conſcience-wounding guilt
Can e'er imagine! Oh tremendous fate,
Too horrid to conceive! --- The thought is hell!

Though *Stoics* boaſt their unimpaſſion'd man,
Of mild compoſure in the jaws of death,
While death, he thinks, annihilates his ſoul:
Though *Socrates*, an almoſt-chriſtian man,
By his own *Dæmon* prompted to be bold,
With ſeeming calmneſs drank the fatal bowl:

*By his own Dæmon*] That *Socrates* had an *attendant Spirit*, which diverted him from Dangers, appears very evident from the Teſtimonies of *Plutarch*, de Genio Socratis; *Plato*, Theag: *Ælian*, Var. Hiſt. Lib. 8. *Cicero*, De Divinat. 3. And even the *Fathers* of the *Church* come into the ſame Opinion: *Tertull.* De Anima, & Apol. adv. Gentes: *Origines* contra *Celſum* Lib. 7. *Lactantius* De Origine Erroris, Lib. 2.

Though rigid *Cato*, obſtinately brave,
Humanely tender of his country's good,
With ſoul unſhaken, the blood-drinking ſteel
Plung'd in his boſom, and intrepid feign'd
A cold indifference, whether balmy ſleep
One night, or death forever clos'd his eyes:
Though god-like *Brutus*, of all heathen race
The beſt, could boldly to the ſpectre ſay,
*I'll meet thee there*; and put the ghoſt to flight:
Yet nature, back-recoiling, ſtood aghaſt,
Nor dar'd to ruſh into the dreadful gulph,
Till puſh'd by indignation and deſpair.

*Rigid Cato*] His Principles were thoſe of a *Stoic*; which Sect, to uſe the Words of a late excellent Author, profeſſed a *proud*, *ſtiff*, *arrogant*, and *unamiable* Virtue, and an extravagant *unnatural* Contempt of Pain and Death. And it is very *juſtly* remarked by the ſame Writer, That He would have acted a Part much more *becoming* the *Character* of a *Patriot*, a Man of *true* Courage and *invincible* Reſolution; if, inſtead of diſtreſſing his *Friends*, and abandoning the *Public* to Ruin, He had *greatly dared* to live, and reſerved Himſelf for *future Service* to his Country. See Mr. *Foſter*'s ſecond Sermon of *Duels* and *Self-Murder*, Vol. 3. and the *Chriſtian Hero*, C. 1.

*I'll meet thee there*] This was the calm Anſwer, which *Brutus* gave to his *evil Genius*, who ſaid he would meet him at *Philippi*. — 'Tis a fine Obſervation of Sir *Richard Steel* on this Occaſion, "That whatever Law we may make to our ſelves, from the Greatneſs of Nature or the Principles of Philoſophy, is itſelf but an *artificial* Paſſion, whereby we *vainly* hope to ſubdue thoſe that are *natural*. *Chriſtian Hero*, page 20. See *Plutarch*'s Life of *Brutus*, and Mr. *Cowley*'s Pindarique Ode entitled, *Brutus*.

Thus

Thus dark was reaſon; though at firſt infus'd
Spotleſs and pure: nor could it re-aſſume,
By native force, that bright congenial beam,
Which opes eternity to mortal man.
If happineſs be then his being's end,
In ſpite of ſceptic pride, he wants a *Light*,
A clearer *Light* than beſt-taught reaſon lends,
Devoutly to be wiſh'd for, to revive
His low-deſponding ſoul, and guide the way
Through the dull pilgrimage of human woe,
To happier worlds of unimagin'd bliſs.

And, ſhall he want this *Light*, this *Sun* of life!
Shall man, like buzzing inſects of an hour,
Mock'd with unreal hopes, with real ills

*A clearer Light*] Divine Revelation is *abſolutely* neceſſary to aſſure us of the general *Reſurrection* of the *Body* to a future State, becauſe natural Reaſon gives *no* Intimation of it. And as to the *Eternity* of future *Rewards*, though Reaſon may *conjecture*, and amuſe with pleaſing *Expectations*, it has no Principles to proceed upon in forming a *certain Concluſion*. See Mr. *Foſter*'s Serm. Vol. iv. page 97.

Perplex'd

Perplex'd, ſpend out his little ſpan, and then
Sink down to duſt, to nothing, unrepriev'd!
All-gracious heaven forbids the dreadful thought.

For, while inſhrouded in this veil of night,
The *moral Chaos*, like primæval maſs,
In deep, expreſſive ſilence call'd for *Light;*
While royal *Magi*, journeying from the eaſt,
And wide-ſurveying all the ſtarry vault,
With holy zeal inflam'd, attentive gaz'd;
Kind heaven in beamy luſtre fair-diſplay'd
The leading *Star*, to optic tube unknown,
Glad harbinger of *Light*, whoſe powerful beams
O'er earth ſhall ſhine effulgent, to dethrone

*Royal Magi*] The ſtudious and inquiſitive, whoſe Buſineſs and Profeſſion led them to ſearch into the more abſtruſe Parts of Nature, and more particularly into the Motions and Diſpoſitions of the *heavenly* Bodies, were diſtinguiſhed by the Title of *Magi*. If theſe *Wiſe Men*, ſays a pious *Prelate*, had been acquainted with *all* the Stars of Heaven, and not ſeen the Star that guided them to *Chriſt*, they had only had Light enough to lead them into *utter Darkneſs*. Bp. *Hall*'s Contemplation on the *Sages* and the *Star*.

*To optic Tube unknown*] 'Tis generally agreed that this Star was no *common* one. And Saint *Chryſoſtom* ſuppoſes it not to have been any *real*, though *extraordinary* Star; but ſome *rational* and *heavenly Power* aſſuming that Form, like the *Iſraelites* Angel in the cloudy Pillar. *Hom.* 6. on St. *Matt.*

The

The *Prince* of darkneſs, and diffuſe around
The bliſsful dawn of *Evangelic Day.*

Let univerſal nature joyn the hymn,
To angels notes and inſtruments attun'd,
And uſher in with acclamations ſweet
The ſovereign *Light!* Let liſtning planets ſtand
In ſolemn adoration deeply fix'd!
On *Lebanon,* ye ſtately cedars bow,
In ſign of worſhip, your low-bending heads;
And humbler myrtles, fragant homage breath!
Ye head-long torrents, that impetuous roll;
In ſmooth ſerenity attendant, ſtop
Your rapid courſe; and ye ſlow-dimpling rills
In ſoft melodious murmurs tell your joys!
With ſweeteſt notes, ſweet *Philomela,* charm
The nodding groves; and all ye feather'd choir,
Symphonious warbling your inſtinctive lays,

Conſpire

Conſpire to ſwell the univerſal ſong.
Even muteſt creatures, by your ſilence praiſe,
And ſpeak in action what the tongue denies!

But moſt let man, moſt favour'd, crown the hymn
With loud *Hoſannahs*, floating on the winds,
To his redeeming God; who deigns to leave
His ſeraph-circled throne, and realms of bliſs,
To reſcue man from nature's felleſt foes,
From *Sin* and *Death*; and give him to the skies,
Heir of their joys! -- But lo, the morn comes on,
Big with the ſacred birth! The heav'n of heav'ns
Unfolds its cryſtal portals, pouring wide
A golden deluge; and th' *Eternal Son*,
Leaving the height of glory, where he dwelt
Through ſumleſs ages, to reſtore on earth
The blameleſs life of *Eden* and its bloom,
The univerſal *Deity* diſplays!

Hail

Hail ſource of joy! celeſtial day-ſpring hail!
Whether to *Prophet* old, devoutly rapt
In eager contemplation, half-unveil'd;
Or to exulting *Patriarch*, friend of God,
Gazing afar, through diſtant ages ſeen
In viſions dim: Or now more clear reveal'd
In heav'n-illumin'd tomes, by *Thee*; fit-nam'd
The *Sun* of righteouſneſs, the world's *True Light*.
Hail mighty *Lord!* by thy all-conquering pow'r,
The rayleſs night of *Ignorance*, o'ercome,
Throws off her dusky ſhrowd, and re-aſſumes
The ſmiling robes of day. At thy approach
Benign, *Diſorder* and *Confuſion* fly,
Confounded more: the congregated cloud

*Exulting Patriarch*] Your Father *Abraham rejoiced* to ſee my Day, and He ſaw it, and was *glad*, *John* viii. 56. — He had a very ſtrong Aſſurance given to him, "That in *Him*, *All* the Families of the Earth ſhould be *bleſſed:* Gen. xii. 3. that is, from his Loins in the Fulneſs of Time the promiſed *Meſſiah* ſhould ſpring. And this *Meſſiah*, as many learned Writers have conjectured, was that divine Perſon, who appeared ſo often to *Abraham* in Dreams or Viſions. See Dr. *Young*, on *Idolatry*, Vol. 1. p. 39. and Mr. *Warburton*'s Div. Legat. Vol. 2. p. 592.

*Sun of Righteouſneſs*] See *Malachi*, Ch. iv. 2. St. *John*, Ch. 1. 9. Ch. viii. 12. Ch. xii. 46.

Of mental *Errors*, diſſipated, yields
Its dull domain; and bright-ey'd *Truth* preſides,
Triumphant, on her native-cryſtal throne.
From numerous ages hid, the beauteous ſcene
Of moral *Order*, *Harmony* and *Love*,
Full on the mind its ever-pleaſing charms
Profuſely pours. *Thy* animating beams
Shedding, all-bounteous, o'er the groveling ſoul
Their ſweeteſt influence, whate'er is dark
Illuminates, whate'er is low, exalts
To god-like excellence: by *Thee* refin'd
And elevated, *Reaſon* knows to rule,
And rebel-paſſions own thy upright laws.

No more ſhall man, unknowing to adore
The God ſupreme, revolve a reſtleſs round
Of wild, diſtracting, ill-foreboding thoughts,

*Numerous Ages*] The Period of Time, from the Creation of the World, to the Coming of *Jeſus Chriſt*, according to the learned *Archbiſhop Uſher*'s moſt accurate chronological Account, was no leſs than the Space of *four thouſand Years*.

Without

Without a ſolid center where to fix
His ſteady view: no more, by gloomy fears
And black deſpair environ'd, grope his way
Through the perplexing maze of life, bereft
Of preſent happineſs, and future hope:
No more, unconſcious of his final end,
Ask what he *is*, or what he is to *be?*
Nor, wilder'd in the fruitleſs ſearch, lament,
With *Wollaſton*, he wants a ſurer guide
Than *Nature* lends, to mark th' unerring paths
That lead to *Bliſs*.--The faithful guide is come;
The genuine beam, full-darting from above,
Strong to deſcribe, and piercing to unfold,
Enlightens all the ways of God to man.

In *Thy* unclouded ſplendor, all-eclips'd,

*Lament with Wollaſton*] This great Author, after having ſet all the Arguments, that unaſſiſted Reaſon could poſſibly ſuggeſt, for the Immortality of the Soul, in the ſtrongeſt and moſt beautiful Light, ingenuouſly confeſſes, *That he begun to be very ſenſible how much he wanted a Guide.* But, as the Religion of *Nature* was his Theme, he contented himſelf with that Light, which *Nature* afforded; his Buſineſs being to ſhew what a *heathen Philoſopher*, without any other Help, might be ſuppoſed to think. *Religion of Nature delineated*, page 211.

Fallacious *Oracles*, extinguiſh'd, die,
Like twinkling lamps before the riſing morn.
Drown'd in *Thy* ſacred light, the richeſt page
Of claſſic genius un-enlivened ſeems
And dim; tho' kindled by the brighteſt *Stars*,
That ever antient *Greece* or *Rome* adorn'd.

*Virtue*, thy nobleſt offspring, redeſcends
Majeſtic in her form, to awe mankind,
And make them bleſt. With ſoft-attractive charms
And unaffected grace, ſhe gently wins
The captivated ſoul; each diſcord tunes
To ſweeteſt harmony; and thro' the breaſt

*Fallacious Oracles*] The Deſtruction of the heathen *Idolatry*, and its flying as it were before the Face of *Chriſtianity*, appeared at firſt in the *gradual Declenſion*, and at length in the *utter Abolition* of its *Oracles*. In *Tully*'s Time they had begun to be contemptible; but they were every where *wholly* ſubdued and ſilenced in the ſame Proportion as the *Chriſtian Religion* prevailed and became eſtabliſhed in the World. See *Cic.* De Divin. Lib. 2. §. 56, 57. Dr. *Jenkin*'s Reaſonableneſs Vol. 1. p. 351. Dr. *Berriman*'s B. Lect. Serm. 10.

*Claſſic Genius*] All the loftieſt Flights of *Pagan* Theology and Eloquence are *low* and *fluttering* to the inconceivable *Sublimity* of the marvellous Paſſages that occur in the *ſacred* Writers. They have innumerable Advantages from the *Dignity* of their Subject, and the grand *Conſequences* of their Doctrines; and every Thing in them is expreſſed agreeably to *Nature*, and the *Rules* of the greateſt Maſters of *Greece* and *Rome*, tho' in a Manner much *excelling* their *beſt* Compoſitions. See *Blackwall*'s ſacred Claſſics, Vol. 1. Part. 2.

Diffuſes

Diffuſes all the ſympathies of love
And ſocial friendſhip. Brightned and enlarg'd
By thy expanding ray, wide o'er the world,
And vital as the ſolar warmth, ſhe ſpreads
Her animating empire, and imprints,
Deep on the human heart, the tender law
Of univerſal kindneſs, that commands
A generous, great beneficence to *All.*
Hence righteouſneſs and peace each other kiſs,
Juſtice led on by fair integrity,
And mercy, meeting truth, joins hand in hand.
Hence enemies, their wrathful ire forgot,
With mutual tranſport ſhare the mutual joy,
And kindly to *Thy* temple walk as friends.

*Univerſal Kindneſs*] How *idly* and *ignorantly* it has been objected againſt the *Chriſtian Revelation*, "That it no where recommends *Friendſhip*, *Benevolence*, or the *Love* of our *Country*, may be fully ſeen in Mr. *Balguy*'s firſt Letter to a Deiſt, page 26. Mr. *Foſter*'s Serm. Vol. 1. page 64. and in a late very *learned* and *ingenious* Letter to *Colonel John* **** in *Flanders*, on the Subject of Religion, p. 42. printed for *J. Clark*, 1744. — Nay, it even encourages and ſtrictly enjoins the *Love* of our *Enemies*; a Duty little *known*, and leſs *practiſed*, before its Appearance.

*Hence Righteouſneſs*,&c.] See *Pſalm* lxxxv. 10.

Such

Such the great change in *life!* a wondrous change
From darkneſs, terror, violence and hate,
To brightneſs, hope, benevolence and love!
In *death*, behold a more amazing change!

Man dares tranſgreſs; man boldly dares to live
And die in ſin: yet, while kind heav'n accepts
Contrition for our crimes, atonement ſtrange
To un-enlightned ſage; *Salvation* reigns
Victorious: no impending horrors chill,
No dubious fears diſtract, the parting ſoul.
Unſhaken at the proſpect of the grave,
She ſmiles on death grim-glaring, and defies
Its pointleſs ſting: In her exiſtence fixt;
From hell's dread tyrant, bound in penal chains,

*Atonement ſtrange*] It does not appear that the *heathen* World had any Notion of *Repentance*, and much leſs that they *depended* upon it, or thought it of any Efficacy. Nay *Lactantius* tells us that *Tully* thought the Doctrine *impoſſible*. Nec tamen deficiat aliquis, aut de ſe ipſo deſperet, ſi aut cupiditate victus, aut libidine impulſus, aut errore deceptus, aut vi coactus, a juſtitiæ via lapſus eſt. Poteſt enim red uciac liberari, ſi eum *pæniteat* actorum, & ad meliora converſus *ſatisfaciat* Deo; quod fieri poſſe *Cicero non* putavit. *De vero Cultu*, Lib. 6. C. 24.

For-

Forever free, ſhe ſpurns the ſordid earth,
And ſoars to untry'd being, wing'd with joy,
With certain hope to paſs through darker realms,
And land ſecure in regions crown'd with light.
There, like a mariner, repos'd on ſhore,
See ſtorms of atoms burſt from wrecking worlds;
See planets tumbling wildly from their ſpheres,
And nature's laſt convulſing pangs of death,
Her ſelf, above the ruins, high-enthron'd,
And ever bleſt with undecaying youth!

But here preſumptuous *Reaſon* will enquire,
Why twice two thouſand years, by lowring clouds
O'erſhadow'd, this bright proſpect lay conceal'd
From *mortal* ken? --- Too pious to confront
Wiſdom divine, the conſcious muſe declines

*Preſumptuous Reaſon*] Chriſtianity as old as the Creation, page 375. and elſewhere. This Objection is fully confuted by many able Writers, and particularly by Mr. *Law*, in his late Conſiderations on the Theory of Religion, Serm. 2. where it is ſhewn with the greateſt Strength and Clearneſs of Argument, *That the Chriſtian Diſpenſation was delivered in its proper Time, and as ſoon as it became fully neceſſary.* See alſo Mr. *Balguy*'s Tracts, p. 305.

To

To ſolve the doubt, and asks if all but this
Lays open to our view? If we can tell
Why men were not made angels, brutes not men?
Why each revolving planet faintly ſhines
With borrow'd luſtre, and the ſun his own?
Tell how the central orb this ſyſtem binds,
Or how, ſelf-balanc'd, high on *nothing* hangs?
Even tell, why ſmalleſt atoms prone deſcend,
Or ſympathetic magnets forceful draw
The trembling ſteel? --- The known *effects* are plain:
The deep, myſterious *cauſe* a *Newton* ſhuns.
Theſe far evade the microſcopic eye

*If all but this lays open*] The *natural* World and the *natural* Government of it, being ſuch an *incomprehenſible* Scheme; *ſo* incomprehenſible, that a Man muſt really in a literal Senſe know nothing at all, who is not ſenſible of his *Ignorance* in it; immediately ſuggeſts, and ſtrongly ſhews the Credibility, that the *moral* World and Government of it may be ſo too. Our Ignorance therefore of God's *natural* Government ought to be a ſufficient Anſwer to all our ſhort-ſighted Objections againſt the Equity and Goodneſs of his *moral* Diſpenſations. See the *Ld. Bp. of Briſtol*'s excellent and beautiful *Analogy of Religion* to the *Courſe* of *Nature*, Part 1. C. 7.

*How the central Orb*, &c.] That there is ſuch a Thing as *Gravitation* and *Attraction*, is manifeſt from its viſible *Effects* here upon Earth: And that the heavenly Bodies *attract* or *gravitate* to one another, is made extremely probable by Sir *Iſaac Newton*. But what the phyſical *Cauſe* of *Gravity* or *Attraction* is, the *Newtonian* Philoſophy does by no means pretend to *explain* or *determine*. See *Derham*'s Phyſ. Theol. B. 1. C. 5. *Wollaſton*'s Relig. of Nat. page 79. *Bentley*'s B. Lect. Serm. 7. Enquiry into the human Soul, Vol. 1. page 96. and *Newton*'s Optics, page 314, 322.

Of

Of all-exploring reaſon, unperceiv'd;
And ignorance in *theſe* accounts for *thoſe*.

'Tis ask'd again, why partial, and reſtrain'd
To narrow bounds, this all-revealing light
Shines with contracted ray? --- Can we explain,
Why various animals with various powers
By heaven inveſted? Why the ſightleſs mole,
Encavern'd, grovels in her darkſome cell?
Or why the eagle, up th' ethereal blue
Soaring aloft, imbibes the ſolar blaze
Full-pouring on her eye? --- Let *Reaſon* tell:
If reaſon *anſwer*, then --- we *ſolve* the *reſt*.

*Why partial*] Want of *Univerſality* is an Objection frequently urged againſt *Chriſtianity* by its modern Enemies. But of how little Force or Weight they are is evidently ſhewn in Bp. *Butler*'s Analogy, P. 2. C. 6. Mr. *Balguy*'s Tracts, page 324. and Mr. *Law*'s Conſiderations on the Theory of Religion, Serm. 1.

*The ſightleſs Mole*] That Moles have *Eyes* in their Head is manifeſt unto any, that wants them not in his own. *Brown's Vulgar Errors.* Yet, tho' they are not *totally blind*, they have not *Sight* enough to diſtinguiſh *particular* Objects; and their Eyes are formed in ſuch a Manner, that the Idea of *Light* is probably *painful* to them. See *Derham*'s Phyſ. Theol. B. 4. C. 2. and the *Spectator* N° 121.

*Why the Eagle*] Her *ſtrong* and *piercing* Sight is finely deſcribed in the Book of *Job*, Ch. 39. 37.

*We ſolve the reſt*] It is manifeſt from all natural Appearances, that the *original* Gifts of God are actually diſpenſed in a very *unequal* Manner. And, foraſmuch as all Gifts are *free*, every Reaſon that can be given, why God ſhould be at perfect *Liberty* in diſtributing *natural Light* in various Degrees, will *equally* hold with Regard to *ſupernatural* Light, or the *additional* Aſſiſtance of *Revelation*. See Mr. *Gurdon*'s B. Lect. Serm. 14.

Or it may be; as fountains, ſmall at firſt,
Roll down their ſtreams in full, majeſtic flow,
And gather as they roll; till nobly loſt
In ocean's all-abſorbing, wide abyſs:
Thus may the *Light* divine, a while confin'd,
Shed partial brightneſs; and, by juſt degrees,
Diffuſe a boundleſs ſplendor through the depth
Of ſwift-deſcending time, till time it ſelf
Sink in eternity's involving ſea.

Ceaſe then to *blame*; nor ſcan with critic eye
The ways of providence. How vain the task,
How vain the toil, with *Reaſon*'s ſcanty line
To ſound the vaſt unfathomable depths
Of heaven's profound, all-wiſe, unerring ſcheme!
Quit that dread point, and learn the firſt and beſt

*With critic Eye*] We are not at preſent, *ſays a fine Writer*, in a proper Situation to *judge* of the Counſels of Providence, ſince but *little* arrives at *our* Knowledge, and even that little we diſcern *imperfectly*. — Thoſe Parts of the *moral* World, which have not an *abſolute*, may yet have a *relative* Beauty, in Reſpect of ſome other Parts *concealed* from *us*, but open to *his* Eye, before whom *paſt*, *preſent*, and *to come*, are ſet together in *one* Point of View. And this ſhould effectually check our *Preſumption*, ſince it is in vain to apply *our* Meaſures of Regularity to Matters, of which we know neither the *Antecedents* nor the *Conſequents*, the *Beginning* nor the *End*.

Of

Of human knowledge; learn *Thy ſelf* to know;
To glow with pure devotion; to adore
With humble, grateful homage; well-ſecur'd
Of this great truth, " *whatever is, is beſt.*

Let reaſon *ſoar*, when mounted on the wings
Of meek-ey'd *Faith*; and, unpreſuming, wait
Till heaven evolves the mazy-winding folds
Of God's eternal will. --- How bright the ſcene,
How juſt the plan, when each myſterious law,
Each latent ſpring of wiſdom infinite
Unveil'd ſhall ſhine! How big the ſwelling joy,
When truth in tides ſhall flow upon the ſoul,
And faith, complete, be ſwallow'd in fruition!
When, full-reveal'd, the filial *Light Himſelf*
Shall pour upon thee one immortal day!

*How big the ſwelling Joy*] It is very reaſonable to believe, that a great Part of the Pleaſure, which happy Minds ſhall enjoy in a *future State*, will ariſe from an *enlarged* Contemplation of the *ſecret* and *amazing* Steps of Providence from the Beginning to the End of Time. And what a perpetual Succeſſion of Enjoyments muſt be afforded to our *Curioſity* and *Admiration*, in a Scene ſo large and various as ſhall then be laid open to our View, in the Society of *ſuperior* Spirits, who perhaps will join with us in ſo *delightful* a Proſpect! See the *Spectator*, N° 237.

*F I N I S.*

# The MAGI.

## An Eclogue.

NO more in beauty's praiſe my numbers move,
Nor melt away in dying falls of love.
A child on earth, yet heaven's eternal king,
The manger'd-god, the virgin's ſon I ſing.
Thou fountain-good, with light my ſoul o'erflow,
With hallow'd ardour bid my boſom glow!
Fir'd at the promiſe of thy dawning ray,
The eaſtern *Sages* found celeſtial day.

Led by a captain-flame, with ſweet ſurprize,
The infant-deity ſalutes their eyes.
No jewels ſparkle here; nor *India*'s ſtores
The portals brighten, or emblaze the doors:
But young-ey'd *Seraphims* around him glow,
And *Mercy* ſpreads her many-colour'd bow!

Her

Her bow, compos'd of new-created light,
How ſweetly lambent, and how ſoftly bright!
The ſacred circle of embodied rays
His cradle crowns, and on his temples plays:
Promiſcuous luſtre brightens half the skies,
New beauties kindle and new glories riſe.
The venerable Three, low-bending down,
Preſent their offerings, and the *Godhead* own.

*Mag.* 1.

From eaſtern realms, where firſt the orient light
Springs into day, and gilds the fading night,
To *Thee* we bend, before the morning riſe;
A purer morning trembles from thy eyes!

*Mag.* 2.

Thou ſpotleſs eſſence of primæval light!
Thy vaſſals own, and waſh thy *Ethiops* white.
Thy cloud of ſable witneſſes adorn
With the firſt roſes of thy ſmiling morn.

*Mag.* 3.

*Mag.* 3.

By bards foretold, the ripened years are come:
*Gods* fall to duſt, and *Oracles* are dumb.
In vain ſhall fly-blown Belzebub rebel;
*Anubis* howls, and *Moloch* ſinks to hell!

*Mag.* 1.

No more ſhall *Memphian* timbrels wake the morn,
Nor towring *Ammon* lift his gilded horn.
No more the *Bull* ſhall fear the ſacred knife;
No *Sacrifice* from hence ſhall drink his life.

*Mag.* 2.

Ye valleys, bluſh with never-fading flowers;
Forever ſmile ye meads, and blow ye bowers;
Bleat all ye hills, be whitened all ye plains;
O earth rejoice, th' eternal *Shepherd* reigns!

*Mag.* 3.

Ye lillies, dip your leaves in falling ſnow,
Ye roſes, with the morning-purple glow,

To

To crown the God! Ye angels, haſte to pour
Your dew of nectar, and your ſtarry ſhower!

*Mag.* 1. *offers Frankincenſe.*

For *Thee Arabia*'s happy foreſts riſe,
And clouds of odours ſweetly ſtain the skies.
While fragrant wreaths of ſmoaking incenſe roll,
Receive our prayers, the incenſe of the ſoul!

*Mag.* 2. *offers Myrrh.*

The weeping *Myrrh* with balmy ſorrow flows,
Thy cup to ſweeten, and to ſooth thy woes.
So Prophets ſing: for, human and divine,
The man was born to *grieve*, the God to *ſhine*.

*Mag.* 3. *offers Gold.*

The ore of *India* ripens into gold
To gild thy courts, thy temples to infold.
Accept the *emblematic* gift: again
*Saturnian* years revolve a golden reign.

*Emblematic Gift*] Some imagine that the *Incenſe* was intended as an *Emblem* of Chriſt's *Divinity*, the *Myrrh* of his *Humanity*, and the *Gold* of his *Royalty*. See *Pool*'s Synop. on *Mat.* ii. 11.

*Mag.* 1.

*Mag.* 1.

Smile ſacred infant, ſmile! thy fragrant breaſt
Excels the odours of the ſpicy eaſt!
The burniſh'd gold is droſs before thy eye;
Thou God of ſweetneſs, God of purity!

*Mag.* 2.

In vain the *Sun* with light his orb arrays,
Our ſenſe to dazzle, and as *God* to blaze:
Through his tranſparent fallacy we ſee,
And own the *Sun* is but a *ſtar* to *Thee.*

*Mag.* 3.

Hail *Lord* of nature, hail! to *Thee* belong
My ſong, my life --- I give my life, my ſong:
Live in thy light, confeſs thy day *divine*,
Adore *thy* love, and freely give thee *mine!*

*Errat.* p. 7. lin. *ult.* read *produce.* p. 14. lin. 13. read *True.*

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